

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL PREACHER.

No. 2, Vol. XXVII.]

FEBRUARY, 1853.

[Whole No. 314.]

SERMON DXC.

BY REV. ALVAN BOND, D. D.,

Norwich, Conn.

HEAVENWARD TENDENCY OF THE REGENERATED SOUL.

If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

COLOSSIANS iii. 1.

THERE is in this passage a retrospective allusion to the twelfth verse of the preceding chapter: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Believers are thus represented as having been buried with Christ in baptism, and also as having been raised with him through faith. Being buried with Christ, and being raised with him are antithetical phrases,—from which we infer that, as being raised with Christ is a *spiritual* resurrection, so being buried with him in baptism is a *spiritual* burial—in other words, a death unto sin. The Christian's burial with Christ implies that death unto sin, which at baptism he professes to have experienced,—a death that is followed by a resurrection with Christ to a new and higher life. The exigency of this passage does not require such an interpretation of the apostle's language as implies exclusive reference to the visible administration, or the mode of baptism. The scope of his argument relates to a spiritual change experienced by the believer as one who is dead to sin, and raised with Christ to a new life.

After having risen from the dead, Christ ascended to heaven, where he "sitteth on the right hand of God." As believers have risen with him, so also will they ascend with him, in their aims and desires, attracted by those things above where

he dwells. Faith sees him on the right hand of the Father, where he administers the government of the world with special reference to the welfare of his disciples, and the glory of his kingdom. Around his mediatorial throne majesty and mercy spread their mingled attractions, and heavenly realities lend enchantment to that land of pure delight to which faith and hope aspire. It were to be expected that the believer in Jesus, being dead to sin and to the world, and alive to holiness and to God, would find himself attracted by the perception of those things which are above. We derive from the text the following sentiment:—THE EXPERIENCE OF A SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION WILL BE FOLLOWED WITH A CONSCIOUS SUSCEPTIBILITY TO THE ATTRACTION OF THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

The *import* of this resurrection, the *agencies* concerned in its production, and the *susceptibility* to the attraction of heaven which it inspires—are the topics contemplated in the present discourse.

I. The *import* of this spiritual resurrection.

1. The idea of a resurrection involves its antithesis, *death*. The moral condition of man previous to regeneration is represented by the idea of death: "You hath he quickened, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." This mode of representing the subject is borrowed from the language of the original penalty, which connected death with disobedience. This state of apostacy is fitly represented by death, because it implies the loss of spiritual life, insensibility to the claims of God, a deprivation of true happiness, and exposure to all that is corrupting and destructive in the dominion of sin—all that is appalling in the penalty of law. The term death is often employed in the Scriptures as the symbol of supreme evil. Nothing is so much dreaded as death. In the common mind it is associated with what is supremely painful, revolting, and terrific.

As no other term conveys so vivid an idea of wretchedness, it has been employed to represent the miserable state to which man has been reduced by transgression. There are strong points of analogy between physical and spiritual death. In the one case there is the extinction of natural life—in the other the absence of spiritual life. The one is attended with suffering and dissolution—the other with the anguish of a guilty conscience, and "a certain fearful looking for of judgment." A vivid representation of man as dead in trespasses and sins, requires the strongest terms in language. It is from this condition of guilt and wretchedness the believer is rescued, when he has risen with Christ. "Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ."

2. There is another sense in which the term death is used in relation to the believer. Thus when the apostle represents the spiritual condition of believers, he says, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." This is spoken of those who are in a regenerated state, and must be interpreted in accordance with the facts pertaining to such a state. The idea is, that of being dead to something—especially to the world and to sin: it expresses a state of freedom from the power of sin,—from its servitude and dominion. Hence the instruction of Paul to the Roman Christians:—"likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It was not the design of this language to represent believers as absolutely and perfectly free from sin. The sense in which they are dead to sin is this:—they have been made to realize its hatefulness; have renounced its dominion, and entered on a determined course of such resistance to it as ensures ultimately its entire destruction. The new man created in the believer may be alive and active without yet having acquired absolute dominion. The old man is not at once so crucified as to cease from sinful activity. As the process of *living* goes on in the one case, the process of *dying* goes on in the other. Life in the new man grows stronger and stronger, while life in the old man becomes weaker and weaker—thus clearly indicating the nature of the final issue. "Therefore the life of the believer," to adopt the words of Olshausen, "exhibits itself as an oscillating between two poles of life."—It is in this sense that the believer dies to sin.

3. Another thing implied is the *conscious experience* of a new, vitalizing element in the soul. When Lazarus was raised from the grave, he was conscious of the vital power of his restored life. How it was produced he might not comprehend; but after it had been restored he had the conscious experience of its influence. So the man whose sight was restored, though he could not tell how his eyes were opened, could affirm as a matter of distinct consciousness, "Whereas I was blind, I now see." So likewise hearing the sound of the wind is a matter of consciousness; though we cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. In like manner the sinner on experiencing the regenerating work of the Spirit, becomes conscious of the *fact* that his mind is pervaded and influenced by a new element of power, which so vitalizes his dead spirit, so influences the will, that he finds himself seeing with new vision, hearing with new emotions, pursuing new objects. The new element of life in the soul may at first be feeble;—still it is real life. As it matures in strength, it will, by its effects, create the conviction, that there has been experienced a radical change in purposes, desires, hopes and conduct.

The man who lies in a state of suspended animation, may be unconscious of what passes around him,—unconscious of the length of time during which he continues in that state,—and unable to recal any recollection of the first breath of restored vitality; but it will not be long before he realizes fully the fact that he is reanimated—that he feels the throbs of vital pulsation. So when the man dead in sins is raised to a new life in Christ Jesus,—he must soon become conscious that a change has been experienced. New impulses are felt in his soul, urging him in the direction of new activity, the tendency of which is upward towards higher and holier objects of pursuit. Things to which he had been blind, he now sees; things to which he was once averse or indifferent, he now admires; duties which once were irksome and neglected, he now performs with alacrity and pleasure. Thus it is that having risen with Christ he becomes conscious of a new, vitalizing element in his soul.

4. Another thing involved in the experience of the spiritual resurrection is an *assurance and foretaste of a glorious immortality*. The conviction of the truth of the soul's immortality is confirmed. While under the supreme control of this world and its delusive influences, there is, in most instances, but a slender and inoperative conviction of the truth of an immortal existence beyond the present life. Many of the phenomena which meet us here, rather militate against, than favor this doctrine. There is, indeed, presumptive evidence of its truth in the prevailing sentiment of the mind,—which looks and longs for a future state of being. But may not this sentiment be a delusion? Who has analyzed the argument on which it rests, with such success as to give it the cogency of demonstration. Aside from Christianity there is no reliable and satisfactory source of light on this mysterious problem. The materialism of Epicurus, to which atheistical philosophy has in modern times added its support, though disavowed in its dogmatic form, exerts a secret, subtile, unconscious influence on many minds. This accounts for their profound indifference to the themes of immortality, to which such prominence is given in the scriptures. The manner in which the men of the world live; their governing purposes and desires; their activities and enterprizes—need but little if any modification to be perfectly consistent with a disbelief in the doctrine of a future state. This momentous doctrine fails to exert its appropriate influence except where it is firmly embraced by Christian faith. It is only the regenerate man that feels the powers of the world to come, and acts in consistency with the divine fact that his destiny is immortal.

The resurrection of Christ shed over this great truth a fresh and vivid light, fitted to dissipate forever the shadows,

clouds and darkness which had rested upon the subject. They who have risen with Christ, are surrounded with the light which he poured over this field of inquiry; and in that light they walk with unwavering confidence—nay assurance in respect to the soul's immortality. They no more question its truth and reality, than they do the reality of present existence. In the exercise of faith, they have, at times, a precious foretaste of the blessedness connected with that future state of being for which they are making earnest and diligent preparation. In the lofty aspirations of a regenerated nature they ascend the ladder of Jacob's vision, whose top rested against the foot of the eternal throne—till they obtain an entrancing prospect of the bright realms of immortality. The voice that echoes from the heavenly oracle is clear and solemn; "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." "This mortal must put on immortality."

"Beyond the verge of infinite space,
The immortal soul of man shall live again;
Live where its glories never more may wane,
And where its nobler memories will efface
All thoughts which rend the solemn pall away.
That shrouds the meanness of its primal clay."

They only who have risen with Christ to the higher life of religious faith, feel, in full force, the conviction of immortality,—they only taste the bud which shall bloom in glory beyond the skies.

II. The agencies concerned in effecting this spiritual resurrection.

An effect, whether in the physical or the moral world, ever suggests the idea of an adequate cause. And the cause is a subject which often awakens curiosity and inquiry. The causes or agencies concerned in the production of given effects may be ascertained as facts, when the *mode of operation* is too recondite for investigation. We may ascertain what agency is employed in the production of an effect when we can have no idea of the way in which it operates. Certain effects are directly traced to the agency of magnetism; but how this agency produces the result witnessed, is an unsolved mystery.

The resurrection of Christ is a historic fact; and as an effect it was produced by some mysterious and mighty cause. That cause is represented as a Divine energy. The body of Christ, from which the spirit had departed and in which physical life was extinct, could retain in itself no re-producing element competent to its resurrection. There was a foreign

agency concerned in this stupendous event, and that agency was God's. The apostle Peter ascribes it to the agency of the Omnipotent: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." The fact that the resurrection of Christ is sometimes ascribed to the power of God the Father, and sometimes to himself, shows that there is such unity between the Father and the Son, that the power of the one is identical with the power of the other.

The *spiritual* resurrection of the believer is an effect for which we must seek an adequate and appropriate cause. There is an efficient *agency*, and an appropriate *instrumentality*. The nature of the effect produced and the manner in which it is described by the sacred writers, clearly indicate a superhuman agency. No one rises from the death of sin to the life of religion by any efforts of his own, except as such efforts are made effectual by the co-operating agency of the Holy Spirit. Reference to one or two passages will be sufficient to determine the nature of the agency concerned in the spiritual resurrection of the believer. Addressing Christians of Ephesus, Paul says, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." The agent here spoken of is expressly mentioned in the following passage:—"God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." The fact is here noticed, that it is the agency of God which is exerted as the efficient cause of the new life imparted to the believer. He hath quickened us together with Christ. The resurrection of Christ is treated by the apostle as having an intimate relation to the restoration of spiritual life to the believer—the latter event being dependent on, or connected with, the former. "As Christ was dead," says a popular commentator, "but was made alive by God's power, and awakened and set on God's throne, so has God with Christ made alive, awakened and transferred to the heavenly state, those who were dead through their sins." "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The apostle in another place refers to "the exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." The main thing which Paul illustrates in the first and second chapters of his epistle to the Ephesians, is the power which God has manifested in renewing and saving his people. The leading idea is, that the same power is evinced in the work, which was required to raise up the Lord Jesus from the dead. From these explicit statements it is evident, that in the spiritual resurrection of the believer a Divine agency is em-

ployed, and that no other agency is competent to such a work. The work of spiritual resurrection by a Divine agency was recognized under the ancient dispensation. The vision of dry bones as represented by Ezekiel, may be viewed as symbolizing the manner of the believer's restoration to the higher life of religion. The prophet proclaimed the word of God, and there followed a movement among the dry bones. They came together, bone to his bone. The sinews and flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them. But there was as yet no breath in them. Then, in answer to prayer, the Spirit's life-giving breath came into them, and they lived. Here there is recognized a preliminary instrumentality, as being connected with the event. There was the prophet's dispensation of God's message, and this was followed with prayer. "Come, O breath, and breathe upon the dead." Human and Divine agency were both concerned in this symbolic resurrection. So are the same agencies recognized in the Gospel, as exerted in the spiritual resurrection of which Christians are subjects. An instrumentality has been provided, adapted to the work, the use of which is as necessary as is the agency of the Divine Spirit. The Spirit does not effectually operate except in connection with the appropriate instrumentality; and the use of the instrumentality will avail nothing without the Spirit. This instrumentality is found in religious truth as revealed in the Scriptures; and the ministry is one of the agencies constituted for applying it to the work to be accomplished.

Nor is this all the agency that is concerned in the work. In addition to the Spirit's influence, and the application of truth by the ministry, there is man's own activity. He is not so acted upon in being raised from spiritual death as to supersede the appropriate exertions, of which, as a free moral agent, he is capable, and for which he is held responsible.

III. The *susceptibility* to the attraction of heaven of which the new-born soul is conscious.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." The idea is clearly implied that such conduct will follow as the result of a resurrection to the higher life of religion. When one is by birth introduced into this world, he soon begins to feel the attractive power of its objects. This is true of infancy, which has its little world of attractions. It is so with childhood, and with youth, and with manhood. In the transition from one condition to another, new objects are presented, and new attractive forces are experienced in view of them.

When the dead spirit is made a subject of the spiritual resurrection, being raised with Christ, new objects are brought

into the field of moral vision possessed of peculiar and powerful attractions, which appeal to the renovated soul with resistless charms. These things above, are what the Gospel reveals as blessed verities pertaining to the heavenly state. It is sufficient to remark in respect to them, that they include whatever is essential to a condition of perfect happiness. In specifying some of these things we mention perfect *freedom from sin*, and its guilty stains. Sin is the curse that blights humanity, and the cause of our fears and calamities.

"Guilt is the source of sorrow; 'tis the fiend
The avenging fiend—that follows us behind,
With whips and stings: the blest know none of this;
But rest in everlasting peace of mind,
And find the height of all their heaven is goodness."

Eternal freedom from sin and guilt, and the enjoyment of the peace with which it is connected, is one of the attractive things for which the Christian waits and longs. There is no deliverance from the storms of suffering and trial, which so often darken and disturb the scenes of our earthly pilgrimage. No barriers we may erect by the aid of our fortunes, our friendships, or our virtues, can protect us from those evils which a wise God visits upon his children, as the needful discipline of the spirit that it may be purified for its heavenly condition. The peace of this condition shall be as a river, whose calm surface shall never be lashed with the tempest—its onward flow never obstructed by adverse obstacle.

Among the things above whose attractions appeal to the renewed soul, is a *mansion in that temple*, whose worshippers will serve God day and night before his throne—whence there shall beam on them the radiance of a Father's love. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." O what a contrast between the things above, which attract the affections of him who has experienced the power of a spiritual resurrection; and the things on earth, which attract with such fatal fascination the worldly-minded. There, the communion and fellowship of redeemed spirits will not be disturbed by the outbursts of jealousy and unkindness, or by the lamentable inconsistencies so often witnessed in the church below. There, certainty of knowledge will preclude all error, delusion and doubt. Here we know only in part; but there shall we know as we are known. There shall be solved the mysteries which pained and perplexed us during the pilgrimage of life.

Raised with Christ to the privileges and honors of such a resurrection, it is manifest how believers are exalted to heavenly places, where they may have a clear and ravishing vision of those things above, whose matchless attractions must appeal with power to every pious heart. These things which mortal eye hath not seen, may be so contemplated with the eye of faith, that the soul shall be absorbed with their spiritual beauties, and supernal glories. How reasonable the counsel of our text,—“if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above”—open your heart to the full power of their attractions—let them withdraw you wholly from the treacherous vanities of earth.

“Thrice happy world, where gilded toys
No more disturb our thoughts, no more pollute our joys!
There light or shade no more succeed by turns,
There reigns the eternal sun with an unclouded ray,
There all is calm as night, yet all immortal day,
And truth forever shines, and love forever burns.”

Does any one ask,—in what consist those attractions, which draw the regenerate spirit upward with such power and pleasure? The answer is obvious:—the attracting elements of that world are *purity* and *charity*. There will be experienced no annoying consciousness of imperfection,—no hankering after forbidden pleasures—no repinings awakened by the painful mysteries of providence. Every heart is pure; and in its purity it can enjoy God. There, too, is the reign of heaven-born charity,—that charity which the apostle has described with a spirit bathed in unearthly elements,—with a pen dipped in the tints of the rainbow which hangs its arch of glory over the throne of the Lamb. No germ of selfishness opens there its lurid and offensive blossoms; no petty rivalries and jealousies create discordant tones in the heavenly anthem; no pride sets up its narrow-souled pretensions; no breath of scandal taints the air of paradise; no unkind breezes create a ripple in the river of pleasure, which waters and refreshes the heavenly fields—All is love, joy, peace, unalloyed—uninterrupted—unending.

From the foregoing remarks it follows that a conscious susceptibility to the attraction of things above, is a *distinct element of Christian character*. The new-born spirit, having risen with Christ, naturally seeks heavenly objects, attracted by their transcendent worth and loveliness. They offer to the mind objects fitted to satisfy its largest cravings and loftiest aspirations. Worldly minds feel and obey the force of a downward gravitation. But it is not so—so it cannot be with the spiritual mind. If risen with Christ, its aspirations will

be heavenward. Impeded the Christian may be by the counteracting tendencies of indwelling sin, and the allurements of the world, in his efforts to maintain his upward way, and keep his affections on things above. But risen with Christ, he will feel the impulses of a heavenward tendency, bearing his soul upward as on the eagle's wing, where it may enjoy communion with the unrivalled objects of the New Jerusalem.

Whoever is conscious of being uninterested in those things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; or conscious of being more strongly interested by worldly objects, amusements and pleasures than by the attractions of heaven, may conclude that he has never experienced the power of a spiritual resurrection. I submit the solemn question to your common sense: whether the man who has risen with Christ to the possession of that higher life which the Holy Spirit breathes into the soul, will be captivated with the ephemeral, delusive, ensnaring attractions of worldly objects, or worldly amusements? Will such a man seek his pleasure on the enchanted ground of sin and Satan? Will he relish the absorbing excitements and brilliant follies of the ball-room; or the theatre with its imposing exhibitions, or the sporting saloon with its revelry and perilous indulgences?

Tell me not that a soul which has experienced the power of a spiritual resurrection can be charmed with the attraction of such things, instead of being captivated with the sublime realities and glories which Jesus has revealed. No—its aspirations must be heavenward, and kindling with the heavenly fires of its original constitution, it will seek its native realm above the skies. It cannot relish the pleasures of sin, after having tasted the joys of that higher sphere to which it is introduced by its spiritual birth. Risen with Christ, you will set your affections on things above, and hold sweet communion with heavenly realities.

The subject is commended to your earnest attention, Christian brethren, as one whose faithful application will furnish a searching test of character. Can you bear the application, and come forth from the trial of your experience and your hopes, rejoicing in the assurance that you have indeed risen with Christ to the undying activities and elevated pleasures of the new and higher life of faith and charity? If so, then are you dead to sin, its pleasures, friendships and pursuits. And more—you are alive unto God, his service, his honor and his kingdom. The standard which the text proposes is elevated; but you must walk by it or renounce the hope that you have risen with Christ. He must live in you—in you his spirit must dwell, or you cannot be his disciple.

SERMON DXCI.

BY REV. DANIEL P. NOYES,

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE Grog-SHOP.

Till the whole was leavened.—MATT. xiii. 33.

THESE are the words of Him who saw the end in the beginning. Looking to that end he lived, and died to live again. We, looking to the same end, shall travel in his footsteps; and whether living or dying, we shall be his, and like him.—“Till the whole is leavened!” It should be the motto of every individual Christian in his efforts to conquer the sin that rules in his own soul; and the maxim of every Christian community in its warfare of love against the evil infesting that community; and the watchword of the Church universal militant against the world of iniquity. It becomes us to act in view of that which is the real and true object of all our labor; not in view of false or even of partial ones. These may lead us astray—but that one, never. The sailor in northern seas who guides himself altogether by the floating ice-islands, or the temporary channels between them, will miss his way. He must pursue the pole star. So the Christian must hold his eye upon the one great object of his striving, and this is that “the whole be leavened.”

The child in his thoughtlessness, loiters on his path; gathers flowers, stops to listen to the babbling brooks, pauses to pluck berries here, and there goes chasing after a singing bird, or a butterfly. Thus the child: but the man, more wise, pushes straight on—toward his object. A diversity of little transitory motives coming in succession, enfeeble and distracts the soul. One great motive makes it strong and self-accordant. These narrower objects but partially rouse a part of our energies. A single great one, blending the forces of all in one glorious and thrilling unity, penetrates the centre of the soul with its fiery magnetism, and stirs the depths, the home of the harmonies, and we act with all the forces of our being, all awake and all accordant.

Let no one, then, propose to himself his own salvation, merely, and nothing more: “He that saveth his life shall lose it.” Nor let this church propose to itself merely to be a prosperous church. We are not “to seek our own” exclusively; and if we do, we seek in vain. Nor is it enough that as individuals and as a church we aim to become instrumental in Divine hands, for the conversion of those immediately about us, and suffer our minds to dwell on that object alone. Our word should be, not till these and those be leavened, but “till the whole is leavened.”

And what, my brethren, is to man, the whole? Are we to say the whole town or city?—the whole country?—the whole continent? No!—but the whole world! The day shall come when all nations shall be united together in one great realm, the kingdom of God: when his pure laws shall be honored in all decrees and systems of legislation; when the principles upon which our Lord Jesus Christ founded his divine life, shall be the ruling principles at once of all individual, and of all national life; when the spirit of Jesus shall find a home in all the families of the earth, and the morning light as it falls upon meridian after meridian, and advances from region to region of continent or island-sprinkled ocean, shall

awaken amid the incense-breathing fields, and the song of many happy creatures, the voice also of human praise, and the incense of prayer from household altars: evening, too, shall renew the same in softer voices, and all things that have breath shall thank the Lord. We are coming to that day! This is not poetry—it is prophecy. The time is coming! We can see it on its way. The hills have—many of them—already been made low, and the vallies filled. *He* is coming who “shall rule the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth.” We may indeed not live here to see it—but we shall see it! And we may labor for it now, may hold it in our eye, may drink in the strength which the vision gives, and, filled with the glory of it, may walk in its light. There is no night to them to whom the Lamb giveth light.

Fastening our eyes therefore upon this great object, drawing deep breaths of determination and of quiet joy—permitting soul and body to fill with the sacred warmth, and the new energy which run throughout our being as we gaze—thus may we wisely judge of our present course, and decide upon particular duties: only thus. For we must act in view of a great object, of the whole object, of the true object.

Let us reason a little in view of this. Our purpose is to Christianize the world. We have already begun to labor specifically for that high end. The world is open before us. Our laborers have gone forth to their toil. But how? Is it not needful that we christianize our own people, while seeking to subject other nations to the truth? Is it possible to carry that great work to perfection while this at home lingers tardily? Will not resources fail—cease to be adequate to the ever growing emergency? Or may not even the spirit of Christian enthusiasm in our own community, be secretly perverted by slow unbelief? Must we not go on from conquering to conquer here, if we would hope to extend, or even maintain our conquests abroad? There can be but one answer to this momentous question. Looking to the christianization of the world, every heart replies, Our own people must be thoroughly pervaded, in all ranks, classes, sects, parties, divisions, with the sacred element of the Christian spirit, and of Christian truth.

Now, therefore, there is another great object which we must propose to ourselves, lesser than the first, indeed, and preparative to it, its “forerunner,” yet great. It is—the *Christianization of this entire American people*; not of its best educated, and most refined portion, but of its *great masses*. Yes, that must be done. It can be done. It can be done soon if Christians will but faithfully try. We may, possibly, within a few years, hear something from Ireland, which shall make plain to us the ease with which a nation may be subjected to christian influences, when Christians are in earnest. And we need not look beyond the sea, if we will only look beyond death and time—to God; for when we do that, do we not know, in our heart of hearts, my brethren, that this thing can be done? The truth is, it has never yet been tried. Denominations, indeed, have been pushing themselves, and often with great energy, and sometimes with shameful differences, and in a spirit of rivalry, or vulgar arrogance, such as makes good men blush. A noble society, likewise, now grown to be an object of reverent love to all our hearts, has these many days been casting its bread upon the waters, and sowing wide its seeds of light. But notwithstanding all this, never yet, as I believe, have the American churches, or any considerable portion of them, engaged, with an adequate appreciation at once of the greatness—of the necessity—and of the feasibility of the work, in the enterprise of making this nation a thoroughly *Christian* people in all its ranks, and through all its mass. In every large town, through sparsely settled regions of the country, and most of all, in the garrets and cellars of our crowded cities, there are hundreds and thousands unaffected, and almost untouched by any worthy religious influence.

Here then, is a work which must be done; and it will be done. God knoweth how; and he will teach us how, so soon as we are sincerely ready to learn and to do.

The time is coming, when this mighty nation stretching from sea to

sea, and from polar snows to torrid heats, looking eastward upon Europe, mother of arts and of arms, and westward, over the thousand islands of the peaceful sea to those eldest empires whose history almost antedates the age of fable—motionless beneath the weight of their thronging millions enfolding a third part of earth's sons, and torpid as the reptile that has slept a thousand years within the stone—this nation, the mediator, thus between two worlds, and awakening both with its youthful shout and song—gathering with its two hands the commerce of the earth, cherishing within its own affluent bosom, its hundreds of millions, free, intelligent, and happy—this mightiest and noblest people that time hath known, *shall be the people of the Lord.* Just laws within and a generous policy toward all without, private probity and public honor, the splendors of honest wealth, the dignities of noble worth and station, the graceful accomplishments of refined society, consummate victories of intellect and soul in the wonders of art, in scientific triumphs, and the glorious achievements of literature, the magnificence of national power, the thrilling glow of great memories, and of sublime hopes, the grateful homage of living and of departed worth, the exaltation of spirit with which the soul grasps mighty truths, and appropriates grand purposes, the delights of benevolence, the domestic bliss of pious homes, the sweet intercourse of love and friendship,—all the wide-spread and peaceful glories, and victories, and bounties and beauties, and benevolences that make the wonderful charm of the Christian spirit in all the domain of human action and experience—the Faith that conquers death, the Hope that hath the foretaste of heaven, the Charity that is the “greatest of these”—in one word—the broad sunlight of God shed upon the heart, and flooding all its chambers—these blessings shall unite here, and in them all shall man rejoice, and God be glorified.

To the final achievement of this grand result, then, as subordinated to one grander still, are we called upon to live and work. All motives of patriotism, of philanthropy, and of religion, combine to establish us in this high aim, and to awaken our profoundest enthusiasm in the great resolve—*That the American People, in all its classes, and throughout its whole mass, shall become in the subtlest essence of its spirit, in the predominant qualities of its character, and in the outgoings of its life, a truly Christian people.*

Holding still in view the two great objects already mentioned, and in the light of our purpose, judging—let us further inquire whether *We*, the Christians, (or persons who ought to be Christians,) in this community—whether *we*, in particular, have not a *third* great object to gain, lesser than the other two indeed, yet great and conducive to their attainment. We propose to ourselves that the masses of the American people be permeated with the Christian spirit—do we not? But *where* are we? and *where* is our influence most powerful? Where may our labors be made to tell most directly and effectively? Where is our *work-field*? Where, but here at home, in our own community, among our own churches, in our own streets, with our own neighbors, through our own local government, and the social agencies which exist or may be created *here*? And do we not know that the example of our large cities is potent throughout the land? and that what one does, others are likely to imitate? and that a noble stand for righteousness taken in any of these is felt in all? The influence flashes with lightning speed, from one great center to another, travels like a tidal wave along the shores and up navigable streams, rushes on iron roads outstripping the wind—touches soon the mighty national heart, which though you cannot find the place of it, quivers, yet, with each vibration throughout the whole body, and sends its vital magnetism to the remotest fibre, and the minutest particle.

Is there not then a *third* great object before us? What is it? I am sure that I interpret your own thoughts when I say—*It is—thoroughly to christianize this city.* This, indeed, is a more difficult work, than to half-accomplish the same result in a community many times as large: but it is also a nobler work, and would prove in the end a more significant and important achievement. For there are thousands of communities in Christendom that have been partially subjected to religious influences;

but nowhere in any land, can a city of a hundred thousand, or even of fifty thousand inhabitants be found, where all classes and ranks are in the main controlled by the Christian spirit. In all the world there is not *one*! And now, our nation suffers for want of such an example. A world buried in sin cries out for it: and we may be sure, my fellow-citizens, and my fellow-Christians, that its cry is heard of him who giveth recompense both to the faithful and to the unfaithful. O for one large city, where vice is ashamed and hides its head, and is pining in secret and dying out! where criminal poverty is unknown, and idleness is a stranger, and profanity does not taint the public air, and drunken shouts and ribaldry are never heard! where rich and poor dwell together in mutual charity; and where personal honor, and a high probity are the rule, and not the exception; where demagogues can find no fools to flatter, and politicians do not stoop that they may conquer, and Christians love one another without jealousy, and unite always in bearing each others' burthens, and fulfilling the law of Christ, and doing the Master's work! O for a city overshadowed by righteousness, and honor, and purity, and peace, filled with high enterprize, and religious courage, with magnanimous sympathies and instincts, with the manifold impulses of a humane and godly enthusiasm, with the invincible strength of Christian faith, with the divine light of love! O for *one* such city in the wide earth! Let there be *one* such, and it shall fill the world with its heaven! That will be a happy day, not for ourselves alone, but for all nations, tongues, and languages, for every wild tribe upon mountain, or sandy waste, for every decaying realm enervated by corruption, a day of glad tidings and of great joy to universal human kind, when *one* such city shall let its light shine. Be it ours to labor and to endure, that, by the grace of God, our city may become that blessed one. Thankfully we take the purpose to our hearts, to make this, our home, a fountain of gladness to the whole earth. Wherever our lot may hereafter be cast, whether in the great metropolis or in some secluded hamlet of the country, let the same religious aim inspire our efforts and dictate our plans.

But let us see what is *practicable*. We do not wish to be the dupes of imagination. We would present to our minds a definite, and a feasible object. What plan and what endeavor does our duty now force upon us?

I claim, my hearers, THAT WE OUGHT TO SET BEFORE OURSELVES, AS AN IMMEDIATE, ATTAINABLE END, THE SUBSTANTIAL CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE MASSES OF THIS COMMUNITY.

But how much is involved in this? A few words will explain. Obviously, we do not mean to affirm the probability of the immediate conversion of the whole community to living and practical godliness. In what sense, then, do we presume to declare that the "*mass* of this community can very soon be substantially christianized."

In this sense: 1. That the great practical principles of the Christian religion *may* be made and *ought* to be made clearly and strongly *predominant* here; so that they should be respected even by those who hate them; outwardly observed by those who have no inward love for them, and universally recognized as obligatory, even by such as refuse obedience; the prominent, clear, acknowledged rules of all public, as of all private life among all classes of the people. At present, religious principle must succumb, it would seem, to everything! Does political expediency mark out a line of policy that is inconsistent with the Christian law? our politicians—not indeed without an awkward bow before the majesty of religion—do yet, for that *once*, turn from her and walk in the way that "*seemeth good*" to them. Does the merchant find that a temporary interest demands a degree of deceit, and cunning management? the "*eternal principle*," must, for that *once*, be compromised, or ignored: the emergency must be yielded to. Are any follies fashionable, are any sins profitable to the purse, countenanced by social, by commercial, or political influence? then the preacher may not mention these—still, for this *once*, the majesty of religion must be decently veiled! Real wrongs, particular crimes, are not to be dealt with; but only sin in the abstract, and transgression in general:

—and so, again and again and again, the clear demands of the law of God, the will of the Eternal must defer to, so called, expediency, to interest, and even to mere personal and factitious respectability—must stand one side, with meek brow uncovered, and let these great ones pass! I do not say that this is universally the fact; and would fain believe that it is not generally so: but certainly, we meet with, and we hear of such things very often.

Now, I maintain that all this should cease: should cease soon. Religion should be enthroned, the one only supreme—the universal authority. In this sense of the phrase, then, ought we to labor for the immediate christianization of the mass of the community.

2. In this further sense, also: viz: that all classes be brought under *stated religious influences*.

Now, there are thousands going wide, unaffected by any regular means of spiritual instruction. That religious influences may be efficient, they must be frequent, and must recur at fixed seasons. A tract, now and then, an occasional word of counsel, a sermon heard, by chance, once in a month, or in six months—very little dependence can be placed upon instrumentalities so desultory as these! We have no right, my brethren—before God, and before our fellow-man—no right to leave any class of our population so grossly uncared for. It is clearly our duty, immediately to provide stated religious privileges that shall reach the unbelieving, the untaught, the falsely taught, and every degraded, every desolate, despairing soul among us. If the people will not come to the gospel, the gospel must be carried to the people.

This, then, is a second step to be taken toward the substantial christianization of the people.

3. The *schools of vice* should be closed, and all open, gross profligacy should be repressed.

This would, evidently, be but a necessary concomitant of the full acknowledgment of the supremacy of religion. For such things are permitted, and can be permitted, only, where almost anything takes precedence of the law of God. No Christian community can allow them without deserting its principles and betraying its Lord. We allow them, my brethren; and in this we are false to our own souls, false to our neighbor, and to God.

4. Christians should be more scrupulously faithful in *specific Christian labors*, and in *all duty*. Let them insist upon the Divine Authority, the dignity and expediency of their principles; plant their feet immovably upon the basis of *right*,—and wisely dividing amongst themselves the labor to be done, let them immediately proceed to occupy the whole field, and let them hold it, till the time of harvest and of rest.

5. As a consequence of all these things, *larger and better accessions* would be made to the number of the professed disciples of Christ.

By the christianization of the mass of the community is meant then, the accomplishment of these five things:—the enthronement of Christian principle as the *highest law*—the extension of stated religious influences to *all*—the shutting up of the *public schools* of vice, and the repression of open, gross profligacy—an *increased* and more *systematic* industry of good men in Christian labors—and as a consequence, a corresponding *increase* in their numbers.

This is the object which we ought to set before ourselves as immediately attainable. But what is meant by immediately? This—that we ought at once to enter systematically upon this work, with a sure faith in its speedy accomplishment; resolved that by the grace of God, any obstacles to the contrary notwithstanding, it shall be *done*.

But is this feasible? Is there any practicable method of bringing it about? We have no right to represent a serious enterprise, even to our own minds, in unreal and extravagant coloring; but must, in all things, hold fast upon truth and reality. Is this undertaking feasible, in our own day, or must it be left to future generations?

Upon this question of *practicability*, I remark—

I. No community can ever become pervaded with the Christian spirit so long as it endorses public schools of vice, and open gross profligacy.

Religion cannot be crowned with supreme authority, and enthroned in public reverence, so long as irreligion is openly vaunting itself, publicly attacking and secretly undermining that authority, and that reverence. The community which looks upon gross immorality running riot in her streets, without making resolute specific endeavors to put it down, can lay no claim to the spirit of Christ, and is not worthy the name of a God-fearing people. Whatever the character of individuals in it may be, however pure, however high, still, as a society, it does not fear God; does not love man; is neither righteous nor wise, nor in any Christian or truly human judgment, respectable. For the things that are pure and good, and the men that are faithful and just, alone are worthy of our honor and affection. A community that has not conscience enough to rebuke and sternly resist the open assaults of outrageous vice, cannot be held in veneration by any true and thoughtful soul. My brethren, it is impossible! Can such a soul be deluded into the fancy, that a community which regards gross iniquity as a venial thing, an enemy to be treated with, an evil to be endured—is yet conscientiously careful of lesser matters, and at heart a Christian society? There may be Christian men in it, and many Christian influences; but, manifestly, these men are not the ones who give it character; nor do these influences control it. Can we expect such a society to add to its faith, virtue; to its virtue, knowledge, brotherly kindness, charity; to become in its members “a partaker of the divine nature?” Can we for a moment, imagine that the mass of this society is in any sense “christianized,” or can become so—that it is advancing toward Christian perfection, or can advance, so long as it does, in its capacity of a social body and a body politic, permit an open, gross vice, which publicly, socially, and privately, is acknowledged to be gross, and abominable—permit this vice, not only to continue, in the main, unmolested, but even to be continually infused into the habits of the young, by incessant public example, solicitation, and almost by force—thus to be making daily progress, while thousands of criminals, and thousands of paupers are annually dragged thereby to almshouse and to prison, and thousands of unhappy wives are given over to a slow death in sore toil, and heart-breakings—and thousands upon thousands of poor, neglected children are left to grow up in ignorance, and sin, to become the pest of society, and the peril of the State! The Christians here would Christianize the whole mass of this community! Is there any reliance to be put upon such professions, while these Christians do not so much as try to make it a decently moral community? Is it agreeable with reason, and common sense, that those who are not moved at the daily contemplation of open wickedness, should be so very sensitive to inferior faults; to more refined and less destructive sins?—that those should be filled with grief in view of the general depravity of human nature, who meet every day some of the worst developments of this corruption, and pass coolly by “on the other side?” There is but one answer to these questions: in short, we have no reason to expect that this city will be thoroughly christianized, until we see that at least gross vice is thoroughly hated. Men never climb to the top of a mountain, till they have passed the limits of its base. This community will not ascend the holy heights of Zion, till, at least, it has left that valley of Hinnom, where it has been offering, so long, its sons and its daughters to Moloch—till it cease to yield them to these infernal fires. My brethren, it is necessary that your Christian principle should decide all great questions; then, possibly, it may come to decide all questions. But if you neglect the weightier matters of the law, then your laying tithes upon mint, anise and cummin, is but a mere matter of tradition or of hypocrisy; has no virtue in it, and will do little or no good. If you are the enemies of sin, prove your enmity upon those sins that are most fatal. If you are consecrated to the service of God, do not omit your service exactly there, where it is most needed. Having gone into his vineyard to labor, do not content yourself with pulling the comparatively harm-

less weeds, while you leave the inveterate brambles, long embedded in the soil, to grow, and toughen, and extend—secretly rooting out the vines—openly casting deadly shade upon them, and breathing mildew and decay.

These counsels, I am sure, do at once approve themselves to your reason and conscience. But no one can compel you to *obey* your reason and your conscience. Let us remember, my brethren, that *God judgeth us*.

We have now seen, how upon general principles of common sense, a community cannot become *perverted* with the Christian spirit, so long as it quietly endures, the presence of public schools of vice, and of a gross, open profligacy. We have seen how that according to laws of human nature which we instinctively apprehend, it is impossible for such a people to make advances in spiritual things. Scattered individuals may,—the people cannot. We have seen how there is even a contradiction in terms, in supposing a society which is lukewarm in its concern for the most palatable and greatest interests to be really zealous for such as are less open and less impressive; and therefore that such lukewarmness is really an evidence of a lack of the essential principle of Christianity. It must be so. For the Church is not ignorant. It does not want for facts. It wants a will; it wants warmth of purpose; it wants *love*—in the absence of which all other things profit nothing.

But even if this were not so—if its present condition were all that any could pray for—if every heart was glowing, and every hand restless to engage in holy work,—even then, the quiet endurance of schools of vice, and of open profligacy would be enough to cool off all this love, and annihilate all this zeal.

He who stands by, and silently looks on while an evil thing is done, is almost a partaker in the sin; and always of necessity a partaker of it. His soul receives a taint; and a seed is dropped within it, mixed of the elements of imbecility and of corruption. It is dangerous to look on an evil, without hating it. For gradually the conscience becomes familiarized with its form, and familiarity diminishes aversion. At first, the soul abhorred the iniquity; but it checked the expression of its abhorrence—did wrong unto itself by neglecting to act or to utter its own deep conviction; and so, the evil that the soul looked upon, made a mark upon the soul; left a stain, a plague-spot there,—and this not the first time only, but the second time also, and the third, and every time that the evil was witnessed, unrebuked. If then, we dwell permanently in the presence of open and bold corruption, permanently repressing our feeling and ever neglecting to act against the evil, there is a permanent taint, ever renewed and renewed again—made deeper, made wider every day; until, at last, our condition comes to be—that of a large portion of this community, my brethren—a condition of careless insensibility to the evil, or perhaps even of absolute fondness for it, and possibly of hopeless subjection to its power. Not only, therefore, is it true that the Church cannot purify the world while itself sitting quietly down beneath the shadow of gross iniquity; but it cannot retain its own purity. There is no safety in such a truce. There is no hope for the Church unless it breaks every such unholy peace, and maintains an incessant struggle, at the very least, against those forms of depravity which are gross and public. We must be true to our own souls, my brethren, if we would not have our own souls grow false. Thus our highest interest, and the very necessity of our spiritual life demands, that we refuse to have this sin forced upon us.

But even if this were not so—could there be any greater folly than for men engaged in a noble work, to remain at peace with those who are successfully opposing that work?—to disregard agencies, which on every side are thwarting and even anticipating their own efforts? Here are some fifty organizations, we will suppose, of professing Christians, who say, and who sincerely believe that they are striving to fill this community with the Christian spirit, and to turn these thousands of souls to God. Now is it possible, that while sincerely laboring for this, the highest end which either created beings, or the Creator himself can have—for an object

which involves all other good objects, and is itself the best of all—can it be possible, that they are neglecting to oppose those very agencies which are the most efficient, and which are fearfully efficient, in counteracting all their efforts, and making void all their solicitude and toil! Yet this is precisely what the churches are doing! What should we say of a general commissioned for the defence and deliverance of his country, who should employ his forces in arresting thieves, smugglers, and highway-men, but should pay little or no attention to a powerful invading army, which, besides creating three-fourths of all these thieves and robbers, was itself the greatest of all—burning villages, and sacking cities, and making the land desolate? What should we say of the physician, who being called to prescribe for a man that had poisoned himself, should amuse his patient with drugs for this pain and that, with liniments for one weakness and another, with anodynes and with irritants, with depletives, and tonics, and stimulants, and the whole “what not” of the *materia medica*, but should let him take the poison still? If we, then, permit those whose good we are seeking, to be tempted and seduced to the very sin which is most fruitful of sin, and the most potent enemy of all kinds of improvement, are not we, I ask, at once unwise and unfaithful? Is it possible that we should succeed?

But all will be well, says one, if we can but have a revival of religion.

I remark, therefore—

II. It is hardly possible that we should have a genuine and general revival of spiritual religion, at once intelligent and healthy, *until we are ready to do our duty in regard to public and gross profligacy.*

Tell me, my brethren, what mean you by a “revival?” A mere excitement? That is not the thing. A passing excitement is not what you wish!—but this:—You want a reinvigoration of the Christian spirit:—do you not?—of Christian love, Christian conscience, Christian humility, Christian readiness to yield the body up “a living sacrifice,” in holy labor and endurance unto God. This is what we understand by a true “revival.” It is only such an excitement that we value: and there is no reason why a revival like this might not last forever. It would, certainly, have its fluctuations, but, in all probability, if once fully embodied in decisive and permanent public action, it would endure to the end of time, proving itself to be a genuine exaltation of the vital energy of the spiritual life in society, a positive and an immortal growth. This would indeed be a “revival” worth praying for, and if need be, worth dying for! a re-*re*-vival, a new life developed, that should never die. *This is what we desire.*

We will suppose, then, that the consciences of the good men in our community are awakened and freshly sensitive; that warm hearts which had been crusted over with worldliness, are now broken anew, and glow, and move themselves, tremulous with heat and energy, melting in sacred love, ready to flow, ready to bear the whole accumulated force of the soul’s deepest action forth upon the world. Now the community being in such a state is in exactly that state wherein it will not passively endure the continual assaults of open corruption. So long as it submits unconcernedly to these aggressions, its lethargy remains unbroken; and it can hardly by possibility be revived, without rousing from this fatal and dishonorable passivity to clear and decisive action. These two events must come at the same moment. When the Spirit of God touches our hearts, we shall awaken to our duty and do it. So whenever we shall try to put ourselves in the line of duty, we may reasonably trust that the Holy Ghost has excited, and will also sustain and promote our efforts, and that our whole being will be filled with the energy of the new fire from heaven.

It is almost a moral impossibility, that the churches should experience the blessing of a genuine revival so long as they wilfully neglect any plain and urgent duty. But what duty more plain, or more imperative than this? The impenitent heart that wilfully persists in known sin cannot hope for renewal. The imperfect Christian who clings with fond attachment to any wrong habit, knowing it to be wrong, or holds back from any arduous duty when the obligation is clear, cannot expect to grow in

grace: So the churches which behold iniquity surrounding them—gross, open, and vulnerable, cannot surely hope for a revival while neglecting to assail that iniquity. They may have a transitory return of morbid and unintelligent enthusiasm; an excitement which may not be wanting indeed in its good results; they may have an important revival in a few hearts, for a short time; but it is not *possible* for them to enjoy anything which shall rise to the dignity, or shall work out the results of a thoughtful, deep, genuine, and general revival of spiritual religion.

Our community is one body, my brethren. No great event can happen in any part of it without affecting the other parts. Neither any section, nor any class can make important advances *alone*. The head may not say to the foot, I care not for thee! nor the hand to the eye, I have no need of thee! Not even a single church and congregation can take any decisive step, or make any important progress without affecting the common interests of the whole body. We may, in the main, reason of any one community, as we would reason of an individual. The same great laws regulate its moral and spiritual progress. The same high justice, pure, and stern, sits in judgment upon all its proceedings. A like awful recompense is visited upon its sin. A like glorious crown rewards its fidelity.

Every public act re-acts upon the public conscience, and leaves its impress on the public character; and this controls the public destiny. If the laws are just and administered righteously, they tend to establish in the popular heart a reverence for justice and fidelity. If the laws are lax, or if they be administered in a loose or unprincipled manner; if enactments are made to serve private ends; if legislation, instead of being a reflection of the will of God—a translation into particulars of his holy law, becomes the tool of partizans, and of contractors; then are the people instructed in all manner of injustice and unfaithfulness; the public sentiment is corrupted, the popular conscience is debased: and pray, what is the “popular conscience” but the consciences of the individuals that make up the people. Yes, each individual soul receives the seed that the government is sowing in its acts of legislation and its course of policy. The principles which constitute the basis of these, will inevitably become the principles of an exceedingly large portion of the community. And now, can any city or town that is so morally dead as to endure meekly the pestilent example of a base government, the steady growth of pauperism and crime, the continual multiplication of public schools of iniquity—can any community, while remaining in this state, and voluntarily and obstinately insensible to the awful wickedness and peril of it, experience a genuine and general revival of spiritual religion? If you found your neighbor grossly unjust in the most important matters, openly mean, and avowedly selfish, a harbinger of thieves, a companion of profligates—would you expect to find him honestly scrupulous of religious duties, and truly pious at heart? If before the world, he is boldly wicked, is he holy in secret? If then upon the open stage of its public acts the community is immoral, what sort of things will you expect to find behind the scenes, and when you come to investigate the privacy of its individual members? The community, as a whole, we will suppose, ignores the difference between right and wrong, suffers the most open and the grossest sins to pass with weak and inefficient rebuke, and makes no really earnest and vigorous effort to quell abuses and injuries which are utterly abominable and horrible. Now while such neglect is understandingly continued, is the community in its secret heart truly religious? Has it a deep reverence for God, and for his image in the human soul? Is it inwardly devoted to his glory, and to the welfare of his immortal children? Does any one believe that? But again; while the community is thus knowingly giving itself up to be debased, and supinely consenting unto sin—while remaining in this state, will it rise to new heights of spirituality, and pass through the happy stages of a genuine and general revival of religion? Remaining in this state, do you expect that it will be filled with saintly sentiments, and with godly purposes? Remaining in this state, will it abound in good works, “visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and

keeping itself unspotted from the world?" Remaining in this state, will it "cease to do evil and learn to do well," "put off the old man corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, put on the new man" which is renewed after the image of him that created him, and "being followers of God as dear children"—"all come in the unity of faith and knowledge unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?" Tell me, can a sinner, remaining in a state of sin, be a saint!—the "carnal mind" "sold under sin," be "spiritually minded!" Then may *we* of this community; then may the people of this State, expect a genuine and thorough revival of spiritual religion, while remaining careless of the common decencies of morality.

Yes, indeed, do we need a revival—one that shall be deep and wide; one that shall do its work well, and shall deliver us from this crushing, poisonous load of public and private immorality which is breaking down our energies, and paralyzing our hope. But we cannot expect a revival while living in the neglect of known duty. And yet, without it, how can the community ever be filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ? It becomes a question of the greatest importance, therefore, under what conditions such a blessing may be rationally expected? Can it be hoped for on any terms? If not, then with religion, the cause of morality must fail, since, even if momentarily successful it can only be permanently established on a basis of religious principle. What, then, are the probabilities? Are we justified in regarding this great work of reformation as feasible?

In reply, I would remark:—

III. It is plain that a successful effort for the suppression of open, gross vice, will certainly be followed by *renewed Christian activity*.

Here, now, a great practical, moral question is put to the community, and especially to the more conscientious part of it. Its bearings upon religion and morality are made most prominent, and are set forth under the combined light of principles and of facts, of reasoning and experience. Its claims are urged from a thousand different sources; from individuals of every class, rank, condition, and, it may literally be said, of every character; for perhaps the most touching appeal of all is that which comes up from our prisons, and the dens of iniquity in our great cities. Editors, lawyers and judges, chiefs of police, wardens of prisons and penitentiaries, Christian ministers of all denominations, churches, in their individual capacity, and as represented in central assemblies, governors of states, legislatures themselves clothed with all the attributes of popular sovereignty, while the great voice of the people rolls after them in approbation and support—these all have united to present, to defend, to magnify and to urge home the claims of this question, as one which directly involves the dearest and the highest interests of morality and religion. The issue, it is impossible to avoid, to defer, or even to confuse. So prominently, so broadly, so luminously and definitely is it put, and with such tremendous weight is it pressed upon us, that we have nothing to do but to meet it. It is a question of *duty*, and can only be answered by *action*.

Now, I affirm, that when this question has been answered rightly, from the moment of the putting forth a successful effort to do this duty, there will be a renewal of Christian activity. In the first place, there is, already, a renewal in the very act of fulfilling this obligation. Is it reasonable to suppose that this reinvigoration should immediately cease upon the temporary accomplishment of a single object? Will it not rather find that the ground just gained must be *held*, as well as gained; that other points must be carried even in order that this may be maintained? on every side will there not be work demanding continued, and perhaps redoubled efforts?

My brethren, it is impossible, that when once the Christian spirit is roused among us, and has gained such a triumph as this, it should immediately go to sleep again! No—the conscience once re-enlivened, the whole spiritual being once well awake, and we should see a day of blessed labors, a day that would be memorable to all time for its rich results. The mere suppression of the outward instrumentalities of vice, and of its grossest forms will

never satisfy the sensitive conscience. It must reach the hidden seat, the germ of the evil; and having lopped off the outward deformities, and severed this great tap-root of iniquity, the roused conscience of the people would next impel them to attempt its thorough eradication from the soil of the heart, by making the heart incapable—through grace from God, given unto it—of nourishing this plant of sin. To drop the figure—good men in the community having once so far awakened to a sense of duty in regard to a single gross and open vice, would not be likely to remain content with its apparent suppression—with a merely external and superficial reform; but would be encouraged to labor for the annihilation of the sinful disposition itself, in the conversion of the heart. Every one would feel that efforts for the spiritual good of the people might now be made with some hope of success. With such a victory confidence returns; harmony is restored; a spirit of high enterprise is awakened. Let it once be seen that this citadel has been stormed, that the very basis of the hostile operations has been captured, and that, if this strong hold can be held, one great province is forever conquered from the realm of sin, one vast growth of iniquity permanently checked—and who will not feel a new courage in his heart, and a fresh enthusiasm stirring there—the prophet of greater triumphs to come. Yes! this moral victory, won in a right spirit, and by worthy means, would sound like a trumpet-call to action, within every soul that longeth, and hopeth for the redemption of the people. Ay! and it would be a trumpet-call to others too! It would proclaim within the conscious hearts of them that live by pandering to corrupt appetites, and to the passions of the populace, the condemnation which eternal Justice pronounces on their deeds. They know their guilt; and now they feel its shame; they begin to see that their time is short. Yes! for the tide of moral sentiment having risen high enough to burst this ancient barrier of wickedness, would also, of necessity, overflow many a dyke, break down many an old embankment, undermine deep foundations of sin, and flood many a sink of iniquity with its waters of cleansing. The same conscientiousness which was unable to tolerate this sin, will also find it difficult to endure that other abuse, and this injustice or neglect; and the company of good men, encouraged with success, warmed with action, bound together in oneness of principle and of endeavor, would continue to co-operate in the work of God, in the warfare of the kingdom of heaven. Thus would it be found, that in this act was involved a whole series of acts—that for its successful accomplishment, a state of mind was necessary, and in it was matured, which was sure to go farther still, and work out manifold and great results.

In considering the probable consequences of any measure, my brethren, we are to enquire, first of all—

In what *state of mind* that measure will leave the Church and the community? What principles are impliedly adopted and obeyed in carrying it through—what convictions have practical working in its accomplishment—what feelings are born and ripened as the project grows and comes to maturity? Now, I affirm, that this people cannot rise in obedience to conscience, and in the strength of God put down any gross and open wickedness—cannot settle any great question of public morality upon high grounds of *duty*, without the conscious, (or unconscious,) adoption of principles which will carry them onward to yet nobler ends;—without a development of feelings which cannot fail to urge the application of those same principles to other departments of life, and other details of action. In a word, the same spirit which led them to do this thing, indwelling still, and grown strong through exercise, and imperious from its triumph, would become a ruling element in their character.

There is every probability, therefore, *That a renewed Christian activity* would result from the shutting up of our public schools of vice.

IV. This renewal would not be a *transient one*.

If you carry any point through artifice, your success even upon a moral question has developed no moral principle, and awakened no new spiritual energy in the public heart. If by an artificial excitement you gain your

end, that excitement will leave, when the fume has settled, naught but emptiness, coldness, and dregs of discontent—and the last state shall be worse than the first. But if the body of good men in the community, rising in the strength of a moral conviction, in the fear of God, and in a humane love for their brethren, do utter their solemn judgment of duty, and seal it with deliberate and decisive action, then—*then*—my brethren, quite a different thing has been done—the deed will *stand*; it has a vital power in it, and will grow, and will bear fruit unto remote generations. Yes! The renewed Christian activity which will follow the suppression of our public schools of vice, and our most open profligacy, would be no transient activity. It would give an impulse to every good thing: it would greatly encourage every fainting heart among those who long for the redemption of the people. At the present time, whithersoever we turn, this horrid, giant form lowers upon us, with outspread wings and baleful breath, casting everywhere a deadly shade, infection, torpor, and despair! And how do our hearts sink, as we remember that *good men*, whose hearty co-operation in the divine war, would annihilate this monstrous evil—keep aloof; or standing in its very shadow, shoot their arrows upon their brethren!—that the *good men* are not all clearly and boldly on the side of righteousness—but many of them, through indolence, or a certain wonderful, and inexplicable blindness, or perversity of vision,—do not understand, will not act! If the Spirit of all Evil, the Father of lies, and profligacy, and woes, is palpably among us, shall we hesitate to bid him sternly in the Holy Name—*Go hence!* Why, yes, some say—wait. And they *do* wait. And while we wait, what happens? Crimes and woes, tears, curses, and death—death of the body, and death of souls—and death invading fast the precincts of social and religious life.

But—if we break this lethargy?—if we cut short this delay?—if, in the name of God, we set our foot *forward!*—where is the power that shall make us take it back? No! It would be no transient advantage, no ephemeral victory. It would be a step—I hesitate not to say—in the world's history that would never be retraced. The shadow upon the dial that measures the coming of the day of God, having advanced that degree, would not go backward. Remember, my brethren, when we act thus, upon great moral questions, and from religious motives of deep solemnity, we act, not for ourselves alone, for our church, or our city; but for the world, and for time. For time, did I say? I change the word:—it is for *eternity* that we act. Give quick heed, therefore, my brethren, for the time is short. But—

V. I remark: When there is a renewal of Christian activity, there is also a *heightening and an expanding of Christian love.*

We never unite in the common recognition of a great truth, or especially in the fulfilment of a sacred duty, without being drawn closer to one another. Did you never, when in conversation with one or two intimate friends, light, all together, upon some eminence of thought, as it were—whence you had a common vision of some sublime principle, or some affecting reality, and you were all, on the instant, brethren in spirit, your souls bound by that delightful charm in one tearful, loving, reverent union. Were you, now, to join with them in putting into practice the principle which you thus clearly see; were you together, to struggle with difficulties, and endure adversities, would not your spiritual love be deepened, and would not the sympathies of your hearts be mutually warm and full? Undoubtedly. And if your work had been of a kind to bring your soul into near contact with human woes, and sins, if you had learned to pity the erring, and had sought to lead them back to the good way—if you had opened your heart to the sorrows of the widow and the fatherless children, and moved by love, had sacrificed time, convenience, money for their benefit—I ask whether after all this, your own souls would not probably be warmer, wiser, and stronger than before—more firmly and intimately knit together in love—better fitted to be “temples of the Holy Ghost?” Open your hearts to mercy and pity, then,—give the fulness of your love to your sinning and suffering brother, to shield him from temptations, and see whether there will not be a “heightening and en-

largement" of all noble and Christian sentiments within your own bosom. His heart is enlarged, whose runneth in the ways of God's commandments.

But is this work feasible? I remark—

Finally:—We have in the points already specified as likely to be gained, *all the elements of success*.

Nobody doubts that the Christian and conscientious portion of our communities is strong enough, if united in action, very shortly to pervade every rank and order of society with Christian influences. The Church here is wealthy enough, and intelligent, and numerous enough—if it were also holy and zealous—to do much more than merely to "enthroned religion" in this city, and spread through this city the ministrations of Christianity, and to close the schools of vice, and repress open profligacy within the narrow limits of its own precincts. And it is the same throughout a great portion of our land. The question is not one of natural power, then, but only regards the possibility and the mode of calling forth that power in harmonious and concentrated action. Is there any *specific method* in which this may be done? The answer has been given; it has been shown, that from a union in combined and successful assault upon the great educational system of iniquity, which has so long proved itself a fountain of bitterness and death—from the final and complete shutting up of the public schools of vice—from the correction, and elevation of moral principle, and the awakening of conscience that must attend such action, a permanently enlarged Christian activity must flow, and from such activity again, a newness and fulness of love; and these, *these* are all that is needed to success. These are the very elements of power;—these, the assurance of that Divine Presence, which is the assurance of triumph.

My hearers, the decision of the great moral question now in debate within this community is a matter of the gravest, the most solemn moment. The heart of Omniscience alone, is adequately conscious of the mighty interests at stake: and yet we can see that the very fundamentals of religion, and even of morality are here involved; and these—are they not the basis of our social order, of our political freedom, of our very existence as a nation?

There are those in our community, the main tendency of whose labors is to seduce the people from the path of right, to intoxicate them with a spirit of license—an intense, wild selfishness, reckless of all things both human and divine; to imbrute their manners, enslave their wills, and destroy their souls—"fitting them, by vice, for bondage," and using them as tools of their own purposes. With great truth has it been remarked, that the "demagogue is the worst enemy of his species; for he destroys the foundation of its best hopes, its faith in itself," and (we must add) in God. Of our very freedom, he forges oppression. Under his malign necromancy the holiest names, and the most sacred words become instruments of the vilest uses for vile ends; and there can be no constitution so favorable to true liberty or so carefully guarded, but he is able to transform it into a monster and a curse. Passages in the history of some of our own communities, most lamentably illustrate this fact. For "a system by which the voice of the wise, the experienced and the good, is always drowned in the clamors of an ignorant and violent populace misled by bad men, instead of being a system of equality and freedom, is the very worst kind of inequality and despotism." It is, in fact, but an oligarchy, turned upside down—the government of an invisible committee, self-elected from among the baser sort, ruling them by corrupting them, and aspiring to the exercise through them of supreme control—a despotism of the few, and those few equally irresponsible and untrustworthy—despotism without the proprieties and the splendors of a court—the intrinsic influence of royalty without its majesty and its publicity—a secret and a vulgar tyranny.

But will not corruption continue to spread so long as its fountains flow unchecked? And will not the demagogue be mighty, so long as his school—the tipping-shop—shall unmake the men whom the Lord hath made? Will not the people be ruled by base masters, be led into base

deeds, so long as they debase themselves? Is public law venerable to them who are without private morality? Is religion sacred to those whose daily practice flouts all her precepts? Is anything sacred to him who makes a mock of duty? Is anything *safe*, when nothing is *sacred*? I repeat it, my hearers; The fundamental interests of society are at stake, in this question. The inextinguishable curse of God rests on the community which endures the dominion of the demagogue and the drinking shop!

It is wonderful, and it is fearful how, oft times, years are condensed into a single act; how destinies hang upon single threads. The decision takes but an instant: and that instant it is decisive forever! The stroke of the murderer is swift as thought: that moment, there is *murder*! The soul of the guilty man had wavered, and reluctated and hesitated long, it may be; but, finally, in the twinkling of a star the die is cast—the deed is done! All eternity does not wipe out or diminish that brief moment. It was itself an eternity in an instant. The general of an army is weary, and his men complain. He tarries for a night, and lo! the morning that should have brought victory, brings defeat, and an empire's overthrow: the face of the world is changed, and the great stream of events is turned into new channels. All time looks backward to that moment of folly, and eternity can never forget it. O *DUTY*! Awful word! A duty neglected—what ruin may not that neglect inherit! In single acts, my hearers, are bound up long years' results of character. From single acts again, flow long years' results in character: and character is the root of destiny. This community, these churches bearing the sacred name of Christ, this our church for whose character and influence we are responsible—they will reap what they sow. Duties come. They tarry not long; but if they receive not our homage, they are gone—their hour is past!

A future of appalling greatness is coming fast upon the people of this land. A few generations more, and the world will behold on this western continent, either most terrible catastrophes, or a glorious and an eternal triumph. The problem of mankind's destiny for ages to come is to be solved here. We shall need a great abundance of that heavenly salt, and that celestial light which are found only in the souls of the just, that we may not perish in our corruption, and cloud with premature darkness the bright day which seems to be dawning. We are called upon by the most tender appeals which can be addressed to the human heart; by motives of solemn and overruling import—absolutely immense in their grandeur—to be faithful to the duties of our day, and to secure to the next generations, upon whom will probably come some of the severest trials which have ever visited our humanity, the advantage of a firm basis of *religious principle*. It is necessary for our temporal security, for the permanence of our institutions and the freedom and peace of our homes, that we should thoroughly christianize these communities—enthroning religion above all other law, and giving the stated ministrations of Christian truth in some form, to every family, and closing every *public school of iniquity*. If we neglect to do so, then, there is nothing better before us than what we now see on the continent of Europe—corruption, oppression, anarchy, gloom, fear, alternate fury and despair. Such must be the lot of nations that know not God. And in this social ruin, what devastation of individual souls—thousands and millions spending the day of their probation in sins and bitter woes, and dying under a cloud!

The Past joins with the mysterious and wonderful Future, in calling unto us; and they say—"Be faithful to the memory of your Fathers; betray not the hopes of your sons; be obedient to God, be faithful to man—then shall neither you nor your children after you ever acknowledge any earthly master, or bend the knee to any mortal dominion; but ye shall all be free forever, and ye shall be called the sons of God."

My hearers, I leave this matter in your hands. You will act, or neglect to act. You will be faithful or unfaithful: and over all is God, who knoweth all, and who judgeth all.